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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its decision 1998/1 of 27 January 1998, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) took note of the report of the Executive Director of UNICEF entitled "Annual report to the Economic and Social Council" (E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I)) and requested the Secretariat to transmit it, along with a summary of the comments made during the discussion, to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 1998. The Executive Board also requested the Executive Director to include and identify, in future reports, issues that would require particular consideration by the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council.

2. Part one of the present document contains the annual report of the Executive Director. Part two contains the summary of the deliberations of the Executive Board on the annual report of the Executive Director.

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Part one

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL*

* Originally issued as document E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
CCPOQ	Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions
CFCI	Child-Friendly Cities Initiative
CSNs	country strategy notes
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)
FGM	female genital mutilation
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JCGP	Joint Consultative Group on Policy
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
TBA	traditional birth attendant
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDGO	United Nations Development Group Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WES	water and environmental sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WSC	World Summit for Children
WSSD	World Summit for Social Development

I. FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/199 OF 22 DECEMBER 1992 AND 50/120 OF 20 DECEMBER 1995 AND FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The Secretary-General, on 16 July 1997, introduced a programme for reform covering all facets of United Nations operations - "the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the 52-year history of our Organization". The actions and recommendations contained therein will have a considerable effect on the way UNICEF plans, develops, implements and monitors its programmes and on its collaborative relationships with the rest of the United Nations system. While the General Assembly has not completed its review of the reform package at the time of this writing, UNICEF, along with the United Nations Development programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the other funds and programmes - without prejudice to the eventual General Assembly resolution on this item - has commenced the progressive implementation of the relevant actions set out in the reform proposal.

2. Consequently, many of the individual issues addressed in operational activities resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are now subsumed into the process of implementation of the reform package. The present report, therefore, addresses many issues, previously considered as separate topics, as integral and linked components of the mechanisms and structures resulting from the reform process. As before, the main focus of development activities remains at the country level, where programmes are developed in collaboration with Governments and in support of national priorities. Many of the reformed structures have just been, or are in the process of being, introduced and it is premature at this time to provide the customary analysis of the effectiveness of follow-up.

A. Programme matters

Field coordination: the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

3. Country-level coordination between UNICEF and the other funds and programmes in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and with the broader United Nations system will now be facilitated largely by two major factors: the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and a strengthened resident coordinator system. Many of the individual issues of field-level coordination such as harmonization of programme cycles, the programme approach, collaboration, thematic groups, etc., can now be considered within the framework thus provided.

4. The Secretary-General has designated the UNDAF as the centerpiece for optimizing and coordinating United Nations development efforts at the country level. As such, it is a key aspect of improving the efficiency of the Organization. UNDAF will provide the basis, inter alia, for country-level follow-up to recent international conferences and decisions of the General Assembly. It will provide a planning framework of common objectives and time frames, an overall context within which country programmes will be formulated and presented. All United Nations funds and programmes conducting development activities in a country will join together, under the resident coordinator as

the leader of the United Nations country team, to prepare the UNDAF, in full consultation with, and in support of, the Government concerned.

5. UNDG is working to establish the UNDAF as an operational process with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) Sub-group on Programme Harmonization, which is chaired by UNICEF, taking the lead on facilitation. Draft provisional guidelines for the UNDAF were completed and approved by the UNDG in September 1997. Eleven countries will begin preparation of UNDAFs during 1997 and early 1998 on a pilot basis: Ghana, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, the Philippines, Romania, Senegal and Viet Nam. If warranted, a further eight countries may continue the pilot phase in 1998: Colombia, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Turkey and Zimbabwe. Final guidelines for "going to scale" will be produced in 1998 drawing on experience gained in this exercise.

6. UNICEF headquarters, as well as the respective headquarters and regional/subregional networks of the other United Nations funds and programmes, will support country teams in the pilot phase. UNICEF has identified five officers, based on nominations from the field, who have been trained to support country teams in their implementation of the UNDAF process; other funds and programmes have done the same and there are now some 20 facilitators from six agencies working together in joint inter-agency implementation teams to support country teams. A retreat for UNICEF representatives from 19 countries and senior staff from each of the regional offices was held in November 1997 to consider the UNDAF process, review the content, scope and focus of the draft guidelines and clarify the roles and responsibilities of headquarters and field functions in implementation, monitoring and review.

7. The Government of the United Kingdom has provided support for the preparation of pilot UNDAFs, as well for implementation reform activities in Kenya. Country-level reform activities in Guatemala and Zimbabwe are taking place as part of a project supported by the Swedish Government.

8. While UNDAF was proposed as an instrument of the United Nations Organization, it has attracted the attention of the specialized agencies and the World Bank. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and special briefings have been used to keep the wider system informed of developments as they occur and there is considerable interest on the part of some agencies in active voluntary participation, particularly among those that are field-based. A letter has been sent to the heads of all specialized agencies informing them of the UNDAF process and inviting their support and contributions at the country level.

9. Once UNDAFs are operational, the United Nations country team will undertake annual and mid-term reviews of the individual United Nations country support programmes to review linkages between: (a) the strategic planning represented in UNDAF; (b) the performance of country support programmes in relation to their stated objectives; and (c) the impact of programmes in relation to the strategic focus of UNDAF. As decided locally by the United Nations country team, UNDAF might also be reviewed periodically with government counterparts, civil society organizations and donors, as appropriate. The field-level theme groups can also be used to facilitate implementation of activities as well as monitoring of the key components of UNDAF.

10. Within an overall context provided by UNDAF, UNICEF views the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a strong conceptual basis for development cooperation. As the centrepiece for United Nations development cooperation at

the country level, UNDAF will therefore serve, inter alia, as a basis for assisting Governments to fulfil the provisions of the Convention and the commitments they have made. It is in this manner that it will be possible to place children at the centre of the development agenda and ensure that they constitute a distinct and priority concern in the national political context.

11. As a further collaborative mechanism, in situations involving post-conflict peace-building, the members of Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) have called for the United Nations system, in partnership with other actors, to assist country-level efforts at relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, as integral components of the system's overall effort to secure peace and restore sustainable development. ACC members agreed that in these situations, there is need for a strategic framework to cover the support of all concerned United Nations system organizations. Such a strategic framework would contain three primary components: analysis of the in-country environment; setting of policy parameters; and the establishment of priorities for the response programme. Implementation would take place through the existing mechanisms. ACC agreed that two pilot frameworks would be prepared, for Afghanistan and Mozambique. At the time of preparing the present report, the team carrying out the exercise for Afghanistan had just returned and issued a draft report.

Field coordination: the resident coordinator system

12. The resident coordinator system is being strengthened to enable it to provide better coordination and more efficient management of operational activities for development of the United Nations system at the country level. There has been significant progress since the Track II announcement in July. The following issues have been identified for action, some of which has already commenced:

(a) Develop a participatory performance appraisal system for resident coordinators;

(b) Introduce an independent competency assessment to be carried out on an inter-agency basis;

(c) Approve final terms of reference for resident coordinators and commence their application;

(d) A special effort to increase the number of resident coordinator posts filled by individuals from agencies, funds and programmes other than UNDP and the number of woman resident coordinators;

(e) Re-affirm the resident coordinator function as a career objective for the entire United Nations system;

(f) Prepare specific guidelines for annual country reports to include work planning objectives for the coordination function;

(g) Clarify lines of authority for resident coordinators.

13. UNICEF remains committed to nominating strong candidates for appointment as resident coordinators. At a recent selection panel, two of the nine UNICEF candidates nominated were selected and, at the time of finalizing the present report, no decision had been taken on the remaining seven. At the present time, there are no UNICEF staff members serving in-country as resident coordinators.

14. Increasingly, exchanges related to the resident coordinator system are taking place at the headquarters level. UNICEF participated in the 1997 briefing session for first-time resident coordinators held in New York. Training programmes for new UNICEF representatives and for those from UNDAF countries have included briefings by the United Nations Development Group Office (UNDGO). UNICEF staff participated in seminars for new and experienced resident coordinators, respectively, at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Turin, Italy, as well as in substantive seminars on such issues as national execution and capacity-building. These, along with the training of almost 100 country teams through workshops on management of field coordination, have provided significant impetus to closer collaboration within the resident coordinator system.

15. The CCPOQ, through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, has ensured that the resident coordinator system is a mechanism that is owned by the broader United Nations system.

16. The headquarters support function for the resident coordinator is increasingly taking on a multi-agency character. A senior UNICEF staff member has been seconded to the UNDGO as Associate Director, joining colleagues from UNDP, UNFPA and WFP in this multi-agency unit which services the resident coordinator function as well as the UNDG and its Executive Committee. At the country level, multi-agency thematic groups will underpin the UNDAF process, with participation of United Nations agencies, government, civil society and international donors.

Capacity-building and national execution

17. Capacity-building and national execution, through partnerships with government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others, have long been cornerstones of UNICEF programmes. It is only in this manner that programme sustainability and the timely phasing out of the direct involvement of UNICEF is practical. This approach has worked successfully in even the most difficult of circumstances.

18. As part of its national execution efforts, UNICEF works in full partnership with Governments in pursuit of mutually agreed objectives, while the country programmes of cooperation are run by government ministries, decentralized entities and commissions, as well as credible NGOs. Thus, national execution is fostered by supporting the countries' programmes through the provision of technical assistance, material cooperation and cash assistance.

19. Since UNICEF depends entirely on voluntary contributions, 32 per cent of which comes from the private sector, it is indispensable to build national capacity of accountability for funds disbursed to Governments and other partners. UNICEF, therefore, adheres strictly to the programming approach and the financial rules and regulations approved by the Executive Board.

Harmonization of programme cycles and programme procedures

20. The harmonization of programme cycles among JCGP members appears to have continued with good results: currently, 27 country cycles are indicated as harmonized, 54 will be so by 1999 and only 31 are without a common starting date, including eight which are special cases that are unlikely to be harmonized in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the UNDG is compiling up-to-date information on harmonization of programme cycles to provide an accurate

assessment of actual achievement. Any inconsistency between planned and actual harmonization will be addressed. It is envisaged that in the longer term, the UNDAF process will ensure complete harmonization of virtually all programme cycles.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

21. Strengthening coordination on monitoring and evaluation have continued within the JCGP. UNICEF hosted a JCGP workshop organized by UNDP to review the content of the UNDP handbook for programme managers on results-oriented monitoring and evaluation, which was subsequently finalized and distributed. UNICEF also contributed to the development of the methodology and guidelines for the preparation of Common Country Assessments, including support systems for pilot activities. Further collaboration and technical exchanges in monitoring and evaluation are envisaged within the framework of the JCGP and the Inter-Agency Working Group on a range of topics including the evaluation of capacity-building activities, performance measurement and improved database management and utilization.

22. In the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, UNICEF is collaborating with WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to conduct a joint "lessons learned" exercise on the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Other collaboration in this area is provided by participation in the active learning network on accountability and performance, jointly sponsored by bilateral donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs, which not only facilitates the accelerated sharing of experiences and learning but also helps to identify opportunities for further joint work on evaluation.

23. A CD-ROM containing information on UNICEF studies and evaluations during 1987-1996 has been released and is being distributed to all country offices and other United Nations agencies. This is part of a broader organization-wide process to strengthen learning and which has resulted in the creation of the programme knowledge network, an electronic tool to facilitate group working, information sharing and knowledge development; and which includes the evaluation network. In addition, a World Wide Web site on research and evaluation has been launched.

24. UNICEF continues to provide the technical support and guidance necessary for monitoring the goals of the World Summit for Children (WSC). The evaluation of the multiple indicator cluster surveys is almost complete, and recommendations will provide a basis for the adaption of this important instrument to serve better the needs of countries and to contribute to global progress reporting on WSC follow-up. UNICEF is working with a wide range of partners to develop a more consistent framework for monitoring implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through a core set of global indicators.

25. Finally, UNICEF is collaborating with the World Bank, UNDP and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on monitoring the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) goal for 2015 to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. In addition to the monetary indicator of poverty - the proportion of the population with an income level below a certain line, often fixed at one dollar per day - UNICEF will monitor the anthropometric measure - underweight children under five years of age - and the equity dimension - monitoring changes in income share of the poorest 20 per cent of the population. In this task, UNICEF will collaborate with the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which have been assigned a role by the DAC secretariat to monitor goals in education and health.

Country strategy note

26. In countries with country strategy notes (CSNs), the strategic priorities set out therein will find their operational fulfilment in the UNDAF; the two documents will complement each other in establishing the parameters of United Nations system's operational activities. Today, CSNs have been completed in 27 countries and drafts have been prepared in 19 other countries; 15 countries have established working groups and work plans for the formulation of CSNs. This total of 61 countries is far short of the 92 countries which initially expressed interest in the CSN.

27. Revised CSN guidelines are currently under preparation, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the guidelines adopted in 1994. The revised guidelines will stress a participatory process, additional monitoring and evaluation, inclusion of levels of resources, establishment of a consultative system and the identification of themes, as well as the relation with the UNDAF. It is expected these changes will lead to a wider acceptance of the CSN process.

B. Management, personnel and finance matters

28. The JCGP Sub-group on Common Premises and Services, currently chaired by UNICEF, has the responsibility for accelerating the introduction of common premises. Meeting on a weekly basis, the representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP, supported by international real estate consultants from Jones Lang Wootton, are preparing a methodology and operational guidelines for establishing future common premises. The group has established criteria for the selection of priority countries, taking into account the provision of rent-free accommodations by Governments.

29. Bolivia, Egypt and Namibia were selected as pilot countries for applying the new criteria and conducting the initial analysis. It is expected that this pilot analysis will be completed by the end of 1997. The results will permit the refinement of methodology and of the implementation process. Approximately 10 additional countries will then be selected as "Tier I" countries for analysis, preparation of a real estate plan including cost/benefit analysis, and possible introduction of common premises in 1998. The overall strategy calls for progressive introduction of countries as Tiers II, III and IV. It is proposed that all real-estate-related information of the JCGP agencies be organized into a single, common database.

30. On 15 September 1997, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of a United Nations Executive Coordinator for Common Services to head the Task Force on Common Services. UNICEF is part of this New York-centred group, which is examining existing arrangements with a view to extending common services wherever this can result in more effective services. The first objective of this exercise is to provide cost-effective, quality and timely services on a competitive basis with full client satisfaction. The Task Force established working groups to develop proposals for each of the areas concerned: procurement; information technology; integrated management information systems; personnel services; financial services; legal services; transportation and traffic services; facilities management; printing facilities; and archives and records management.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 OF 24 MAY 1995 AND TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

31. As decided by the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1997, its consideration of resources and resource availability will be based on an oral report presented by the secretariat to the first regular session in 1998. A formal report will be presented at a later date, taking into account the discussion at that session.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/52 OF 23 JULY 1997: HIV/AIDS

32. UNICEF has been working closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in programmes dealing with the vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS. Activities currently underway include the preparation of guidelines for health workers and policy makers, a tool to assist health workers in counseling HIV-positive pregnant women and providing women with complete, accurate information in order to make fully informed decisions. In addition, UNICEF is undertaking several pilot project studies in order to implement a comprehensive approach to dealing with the issue of vertical transmission. These pilot projects will be implemented in collaboration with UNAIDS and other partners, and UNAIDS will provide funding for start-up activities. A programme directive was distributed in November 1997 to underscore the overall importance of this issue at country level. Finally, UNICEF has supported the UNAIDS clinical trials currently underway in Africa and looks forward to the results so as to proceed with project implementation.

33. The UNAIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations has agreed to a retreat in early 1998 to review and assess UNAIDS' efforts over the past 18 months. UNICEF will play a key role in this effort, reviewing with other co-sponsors the experiences and lessons learned from this co-sponsorship. The review is expected to identify gaps in programmes, document lessons learned and best practices, and indicate how co-sponsors can contribute further to making the coordinated approach of UNAIDS even more successful.

34. UNICEF has supported preparations of the UNAIDS coordinated appeal for the 1998-1999 biennium. The UNICEF component of the appeal encompasses 13 proposals for global and regional activities, with a total value of $4.8 million. The UNICEF Programme Funding Office will support the appeal. There have been discussions on organizing joint missions to donors as well as identifying activities to maintain the momentum of the appeal.

35. The theme for the World AIDS Day campaign for 1997 is "Children Living in a World of AIDS", an issue of significant importance to UNICEF and a priority programming area. UNAIDS and UNICEF have worked closely with the other co-sponsors in the last year to identify joint activities. UNAIDS issued a joint statement from the co-sponsoring organizations outlining the significant impact that HIV/AIDS has on children and highlighting the need to care for children affected by the epidemic. New data indicates that millions of children will be orphaned by AIDS in the next few years and the UNICEF activities in this area could therefore increase significantly. The Executive Director will participate in the World AIDS Day press conference on 1 December 1997 in Washington D.C., reconfirming a commitment to deal with the issue of children and families affected by AIDS.

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/61 OF 25 JULY 1997: INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

36. Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to recent international conferences has taken place through three inter-agency task forces - on basic social services for all, an enabling environment for economic and social development, and employment and sustainable livelihoods for all - as well as through the Inter-Agency Committee for Women and Gender Equality, which is following up the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). UNICEF was active in all four bodies. The three task forces have now completed their work and are disbanded.

37. The outputs of the task forces can be broadly categorized as follows: (a) identification of key elements of the national policy framework for pursuing conference goals; (b) recommendations for United Nations system programming; (c) arrangements for streamlining national reporting; (d) elaboration of statistics and indicators; (e) identification of other areas requiring attention (e.g., the role of civil society, the use of information technology, etc.); and (f) institutional arrangements for follow-up.

38. The ACC reviewed the output of the task forces and placed the question of follow-up in the broader context of United Nations system reform. It stressed, inter alia, the important role for civil society and reiterated the commitment of member organizations to active follow-up, as well as requesting subsidiary machinery, organizations and the resident coordinator system to make institutional arrangements for follow-up. In the first instance, an inter-agency workshop is to be convened in Turin on 11-12 December 1997 to identify country-level arrangements for follow-up of the global conferences and summits. The workshop will address modalities of translating and implementing the policy and programmatic objectives set out in the global agendas. The workshop is charged with developing several outputs: (a) an integrated message to country teams on the follow-up process; (b) guidelines or guidance on modalities of implementation, including on the utilization of the outputs of the task forces; and (c) identification of actions to be taken in supporting such fields as training, development and utilization of indicators and databases, reporting mechanisms, etc.. The approximately 25 participants in the workshop from all major funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the United Nations and the World Bank will be joined by several senior national officials.

39. Even before the inter-agency machinery provided field-level, system-wide guidelines, UNICEF was actively pursuing follow-up to recent international conferences within its mandated areas of activity and competence and without prejudice to the eventual outcomes of the inter-agency process.

A. World Summit for Social Development

40. The close links between the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) and the WSC, particularly in the former's reaffirmation of the latter's goals and the emphasis on basic social services, have made it possible to view implementation of the WSSD as part of a continuum with the WSC. Accordingly, much of the UNICEF follow-up to the WSSD is focused on activities which are already part of approved country programmes.

41. The WSSD commitment to create legal frameworks in accordance with constitutions, laws and procedures; to provide full respect for all human rights; and to reaffirm rights set out in relevant international instruments and declarations, as well as the commitment to provide basic social services to children consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, has further served to link the Convention to UNICEF programming and the process of inter-agency follow-up to international conferences. This strengthened link has supported the rights-based approach to UNICEF activities and action on such specific issues as exploitative and hazardous child labour. In addition, the WSSD priorities were a significant impetus for the UNICEF priority to active participation in the Amsterdam and Oslo conferences on child labour.

42. Agreement to the principles of the 20/20 Initiative in the WSSD Declaration and the follow-up to the Oslo meeting on 20/20 by UNICEF have provided a new impetus to national efforts to provide basic social services and to work towards poverty reduction. A global meeting on the 20/20 Initiative will be held in Hanoi, Viet Nam in 1998 and UNICEF is collaborating closely with the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway in its preparation. In collaboration with other agencies, UNDP in particular, UNICEF has organized regional meetings on the 20/20 Initiative in Benin for West Africa and in Santa Fé de Bogotá for Latin America and the Caribbean. Similar meetings are planned for East Africa and Asia to support countries preparing for the global meeting, inter alia, through specific assessments of budget and aid allocations to basic social services. UNICEF continues, as per the request of the Administrator of UNDP, to act as lead agency in the follow-up of the 20/20 Initiative.

43. In this area of financing of basic social services, UNICEF organized in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the World Bank a forum on cost-sharing in the education and health sectors in sub-Saharan Africa. The forum was co-sponsored by the Governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ministers and senior government officials from 17 sub-Saharan African countries, NGOs, bilateral donors and multilateral agencies took stock of the lessons learned from recent country experiences with cost-sharing and adopted the Addis Ababa consensus on cost-sharing, which includes 15 principles that need to be observed when cost-sharing arrangements are introduced in education and health.

B. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

44. UNICEF participated actively in preparations for the General Assembly's nineteenth special session on sustainable development through the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development. UNICEF submitted an agency self-assessment on implementation of Agenda 21, reporting its experiences in primary environmental care.

45. At the special session, UNICEF highlighted water supply, sanitation and hygiene as important components of sustainable development and as essential elements of child rights. UNICEF called for a child-centered perspective to sustainable development, including through a better integration of social considerations into environmental programmes and economic development.

46. UNICEF, together with the Department for Economic and Social Affairs, will coordinate the organization of World Water Day 1988 with the theme, "Groundwater - An Invisible Resource". This issue will highlight several of the approaches advocated by UNICEF: low-cost technologies for groundwater-based water supply; and protection of water resources from pollution from fecal

matters due to lack of adequate sanitation. In furthering this event, UNICEF is planning to develop an adaptable communication package for the field, create a page on the World Wide Web, explore the use of media and collaborate with pertinent NGOs and other partners at the country level.

47. As concrete follow-up to the "Rio + 5" process and in support of the Secretary-General's Special Initiative for Africa, two inter-agency agreements in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were concluded this year. An MOU between UNICEF and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), signed on 5 March 1997 by the Executive Directors of the two agencies, addresses the issues connecting the environment and the health and well-being of the world's children through undertaking several specific cooperative initiatives for implementation at the country level. An MOU between UNICEF and the World Bank, signed on 9 October 1997, focuses on safe water and environmental sanitation in Africa. Primary areas for collaboration under the latter MOU are the development and implementation of water and environmental sanitation (WES) and hygiene education programmes in villages, small towns and poor urban neighborhoods.

48. Early in 1997, the UNICEF/WHO joint water supply and sanitation strategy was approved by the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. It has formed a strong basis for action between the agencies and their other partners, and resulted in the development of a global environmental sanitation initiative to forge a global collaborative effort in promoting environmental sanitation. The idea has been endorsed by many partners and stakeholders.

49. Integration of the environment and development is being realized through various programming approaches. UNICEF is promoting intersectoral linkages among health, nutrition, WES and education and the incorporation of key perspectives in the sectoral programmes, such as those for gender and urban issues, social mobilization and the environment. In this connection, UNICEF has developed several modules for the WES technical programme guidelines, which address, inter alia, the issues of gender, urban low-cost WES technologies and communication skills for promoting water supply and environmental sanitation, respectively.

C. Fourth World Conference on Women

50. UNICEF is actively following-up the Beijing Conference through its country programmes and regional and global initiatives. Gender perspectives have been mainstreamed in country programmes, in partnership with Governments, NGOs and community groups covering the critical areas of concern of the FWCW Platform for Action.

51. Girls' education has been identified as a priority area and a key issue for programmatic mainstreaming. As a result, some 70 countries have integrated girls' education projects and activities into their ongoing UNICEF-supported education programmes, which are aiming towards universal primary education.

52. With the adoption of an Eastern and Southern African regional strategy against female genital mutilation (FGM) last year, covering Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, a regional consultation was held in Eritrea to facilitate strategies for ending the practice in Eritrea. The Somalia country office has also prepared a comprehensive anti-FGM strategy. Progress in this priority area is also being made in such other countries as Burkina Faso, Egypt, the Gambia, Mali, Nigeria and the Sudan.

53. In terms of public awareness creation, the girl child continued to receive focused attention in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East in both advocacy and programme action. For example, a National Girl Child week was celebrated in the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania declared 1997 as the Year of the Girl Child. The "Meena" communication initiative in South Asia and the "Sara" communication initiative in Africa are continuing to serve as tools for awareness-raising.

54. As part of the preparation for the review of implementation of the girl child component of the Beijing Platform for Action, UNICEF collaborated with the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA and the Economic Commission for Africa in organizing an expert group meeting on adolescent girls and their rights. The meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 13-17 October 1997, made recommendations to the Commission on the Status of Women, which will meet in March 1998. Adolescence was the focus of the expert group review, the result of a general paucity of existing information and a lack of programmes to address the needs and rights of adolescents who face a wide spectrum of problems.

55. At the global level, UNICEF has called for action in ending violence against women and girls and made it a centrepiece of its publication, The Progress of Nations. A South Asian regional project on ending violence against women and girls has facilitated the creation of awareness of gender violence as an important critical area for action and helped to build a coalition of human rights activists and professionals from the legal, medical, media and arts fields, all of whom are committed to finding a solution. A regional meeting held in October agreed on follow-up action through the "Kathmandu Commitment". In similar circumstances, UNICEF is advocating the universal ratification of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women.

56. As part of its commitment to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, UNICEF advocates and facilitates women's participation in the social, political, economic and political development of their communities. Women leaders are trained to help them be effective in their roles. In general, gender training for UNICEF staff and counterparts in government and NGOs is an important mainstreaming strategy which has yielded dividends in building their capacity in planning and implementing gender-aware programmes. Women's economic empowerment was promoted through support of credit programmes in such countries such as Bangladesh, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Nepal and Viet Nam. These initiatives are usually integral components of area-based programmes.

57. With the adoption of the rights approach to programming in UNICEF, an increasing number of countries are using both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as frameworks in preparing country programmes. An interesting initiative in the Middle East and North Africa is the regional project on the introduction of the two Conventions in the curricula of law faculties of universities in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia.

58. UNICEF collaborates with other United Nations agencies at the global, regional and country levels on follow up to FWCW. Partnerships were formed with the United Nations Development Fund for Women for the Middle Eastern regional project on the two Conventions, and with UNDP on the South Asian project on ending violence against women and girls. UNICEF is an active member of the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and the JCGP Gender in

Development sub-group as well as the Ad-hoc Inter-Agency Group on Afghanistan. Close working relationships are also maintained with NGOs and with other relevant civil society groups.

D. International Conference on Population and Development

59. UNICEF follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has been driven by a multi-sectoral programming approach that includes education, increased economic opportunities and promotion of women's rights to participation in the social and political life of their communities and countries. The primary focus of UNICEF in reproductive health is the reduction of maternal mortality, which is not only a matter of effective health interventions but also of social justice. UNICEF has responded by applying human rights to advance safe motherhood and by translating rights into obligations to be fulfilled by families, communities and local and national governments. Increased attention is given in all country programmes to violence against girls and women and programmatic linkages have been reinforced between domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, FGM and maternal mortality.

60. The principles that form the basis of UNICEF programming for the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity have been validated by ICPD and FWCW. These include: involvement of women and communities in programme design and implementation; confrontation of gender discrimination by health planners and providers; and correlation of access to quality services with health promotion. The main elements of UNICEF programming for maternal health and nutrition are: expanding access to health care and upgrading services; strengthening midwifery practices; improving prenatal and post-natal care; nutrition; and counseling of pregnant women and their families and communities. These interventions have had a major impact on neonatal mortality, which represents an increasing proportion of infant mortality.

61. UNICEF supported preparation of the Safe Motherhood Consultation held in Sri Lanka in October 1997 to mark the tenth anniversary of the Safe Motherhood Initiative, formed by UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO the World Bank and several NGOs. In collaboration with the World Bank, UNICEF organized a technical consultation in June 1997 to discuss the role of traditional birth attendants (TBAs). Participants included representatives of multilateral and bilateral development agencies, NGOs and other experts as well as UNICEF field offices, who concluded that TBA training, where undertaken, should be part of a broader strategy to provide reproductive/maternal health services and should include an appropriate built-in mechanism for referral, supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

62. The UNICEF/WHO maternal mortality estimates, which date from 1990, are currently being revised in collaboration with all relevant United Nations agencies (including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Division, the United Nations Statistical Division, WHO and the World Bank). The guidelines for monitoring availability and use of obstetric services - a tool to help monitor processes or health sector interventions, aimed at reducing maternal mortality and morbidity - have been issued jointly by UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO.

63. At the country level, UNICEF has strengthened its programmes in partnership with other United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, donors and NGOs in accordance with specific regional needs. In West Africa, a solid base for provision of reproductive health care has been established through community participation in financing and management of health services. In East Africa,

UNICEF has developed health promotion projects to address the needs of girls and young women (e.g., a school health programme in Zimbabwe, maternal syphilis training project in Zambia, reproductive health education in Malawi).

E. Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

64. UNICEF activities for follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) were developed in partnership with Governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs. Their emphasis is on mainstreaming of urban children into the broader context of UNICEF programmes, through focusing on the most vulnerable children and the previously unreached, many of whom live in urban slums and squatter settlements.

65. During the City Summit in Istanbul, UNICEF launched the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), a programming approach designed to reach formerly unreached children in urban areas. CFCI seeks to shift mayors from a largely advocacy role to a stronger role as promoters and coordinators of the multiple actors involved with achieving the well-being of urban children, providing leadership at the local level. CFCI establishes and strengthens partnerships for concerted action in favour of urban poor children, and develops child-centred local plans of action that serve as tools for a decentralized implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, incorporating both Agenda 21 and the Habitat II agenda at subnational levels. Along with UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and other partners, UNICEF organized a child-friendly cities training workshop in Ghana, especially devoted to poor urban children in Africa. Mayors and municipal staff from 29 African countries participated, as did adolescents, youth, NGOs and several United Nations agencies.

66. UNICEF is supporting Governments at all levels in their follow-up to Habitat II. In South Africa, UNICEF has assisted local governments in addressing children's rights on urban settlements through CFCI. In Nigeria, UNICEF has produced baseline data to assist the Government in formulating a programme for urban basic services and children in need of special protection measures.

67. The Italian Committee for UNICEF supported the Government of Italy in convening a child-friendly city Meeting in Naples. At the Urban Childhood Conference held in Norway, UNICEF presented the CFCI to participants. The event was attended by more than 700 child experts, academics, advocates and field workers from 75 countries as well as representatives of ILO, UNESCO, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNICEF and WHO.

V. RECOMMENDATION

68. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive board adopt the following draft recommendation:

The Executive Board

Takes note of the report "Report of the Executive Director: annual report to the Economic and Social Council" (E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I)), and decides to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made by delegations at the present session.

Part two

SUMMARY OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD*

A. Report of the Executive Director (Part I): Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

10. The Executive Board had before it a report prepared by the secretariat, document E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I), which was introduced by the Executive Director and the Director, Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations. The Executive Director said that the purpose of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was to meet the needs of countries. UNDAF had already gone beyond its initial concept to include the specialized agencies, and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was looking at such issues as common premises and the resident coordinator system. The latter was increasingly a product of the United Nations system, with four resident coordinators drawn from UNICEF, an increase of three, and UNICEF was committed to strengthening the system. Given the level of interest in reform issues, she offered to arrange an informal meeting on the subject during the session.

11. The Director, United Nations Affairs and External Relations, responded to a number of issues related to UNDAF that had been raised by delegations at the pre-session information briefing on 16 January. He said that UNDAF would cover all areas of responsibility of the funds and programmes and that the specialized agencies and the World Bank were entering the process. The UNDAFs would highlight the strategies of each agency and clarify their strengths and individual mandates. The first pilot phase, involving 11 countries, would be completed in March 1998 and would feed into both the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council and the Council's special session in May on follow-up to the international conferences. As for country strategy notes (CSNs), they were in place in 30 countries, and under the guidance of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), new guidelines were being prepared. Country teams had been asked to undertake a critical review of the CSN process and to assess the need for a reorientation of the CSNs.

12. A number of delegations said that the report reflected both the commitment of UNICEF to, and its enthusiasm for, United Nations reform. Several speakers, however, said that report should have been more analytical and issue-oriented, and it was suggested that a format be developed through which the funds and programmes could seek common guidance from the Economic and Social Council. Because this would have to be done by the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, it might be an issue to be addressed by UNDG. It was also said that future reports should provide clearer guidance to the Council, and that consideration should be given to submitting a joint report on coordination to a future joint session of the UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA Executive Boards.

13. Delegations commented on the fact that the report did not cover coordination in humanitarian assistance, and one speaker specifically requested information on preventive measures. The secretariat replied that humanitarian

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* Excerpt from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its first regular session of 1998. The complete report has been issued as document E/1998/35 (Part I).

assistance would be addressed in the Executive Director's annual report to the Board, to be presented at the annual session in June. UNICEF was a member of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and had been involved in the restructuring of the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. A delegation asked how UNICEF would be implementing the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Development" and said that the report should have touched on progress to date, as well as on any impediments to progress that the Economic and Social Council could address.

14. A number of delegations commented on the UNDAF process in general and on the role of UNICEF in particular. Some speakers stressed the importance of maintaining the unique role and mandate of UNICEF within that process, and it was stressed that children should be a cross-cutting issue, together with gender and human rights. It was said that bilateral cooperation should be closely monitored and integrated with Governments' development programmes and that UNICEF had an important role to play in this regard. Another speaker said that reforms should be introduced gradually, after the role of the Government in the UNDAF process had been clarified. The secretariat said that there was no question about Governments' ownership of and leadership in the process. The role of the funds and programmes was to support Governments in implementing programmes and the outcome of international conferences.

15. Other speakers welcomed the close cooperation of UNICEF with the UNDAF exercise in the 11 pilot countries, with one of them expressing the hope that this would affect other countries in terms of close cooperation and integration at field level. A speaker requested that the Executive Board be kept informed of any problems encountered in the pilot countries. Another speaker said that UNDAF was progressing at different rates in different countries and that it would be interesting to know why. A delegation asked about the UNICEF strategy to input its positions into the reform measures.

16. In response to several comments about the inclusion of the specialized agencies in the UNDAF process, the secretariat said that country offices and resident coordinators in the pilot countries had been instructed to bring in the widest range of partners, including specialized agencies, bilateral agencies, donors and NGOs. UNDG had written to the specialized agencies about UNDAF, and both the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions were involved in the inter-agency mechanism. Asked about the relationship of UNICEF with the World Bank, the secretariat said that cooperation with the Bank, which had been detailed in the Executive Director's report in 1997 (E/ICEF/1997/10 (Part I)), was continuing at an accelerated pace. UNDG and the World Bank had met late in 1997, and a meeting in January 1998 would address technical assessment and capacity-building. The first bi-annual meeting between UNICEF and the Bank would take place in February.

17. With regard to the relationship between CSNs and UNDAF, a speaker said that the decision of whether or not to prepare a CSN should be left in the hands of the programme countries. Another delegation said that CSNs should establish the parameters of United Nations operational activities for development and regretted that only a small number of countries were participating in the process. Hopefully the revised guidelines would increase the number of participating countries. However, another delegation said that the CSN could

become irrelevant because of UNDAF. The secretariat said that the CSN had many benefits, including the provision of data and information needed by the United Nations. Ownership by Governments was critical to the success of the process.

18. Regarding follow-up to the international conferences, delegations asked about the role of UNICEF as the lead agency for the 20/20 Initiative and suggested that UNICEF provide input to the special session of the Economic and Social Council. Comments were also made about UNICEF follow-up to the 1996 World Food Summit and its involvement in the upcoming meeting on water being organized by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The secretariat said that UNICEF was taking part in the preparations for the "International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) + 5", which would include a round-table on 1 April on adolescent reproductive health.

19. Several delegations said that more resident coordinators should be chosen from UNICEF and from other funds and programmes. It was suggested that financing of the resident coordinator system be shared among the participating agencies. In addition, a speaker said that joint efforts by agencies, under the guidance of the resident coordinator, would make the best possible use of resources, and stressed the importance of national execution, cooperation with the Government, clear-cut planning and distribution of financial resources. The speaker also suggested that her region, Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, be renamed "the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia".

20. Responding to questions about common premises, the secretariat stated that the process was moving quickly. One delegation stressed the importance of cost-effectiveness when making decisions on common premises and said that their establishment should affect programme implementation.

21. Delegations expressed concern about comments made by the Executive Director in her opening statement regarding difficulties in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. A delegation asked about the inclusion of the World Summit goals in the UNDAF process. Another delegation said that countries that would soon graduate from receiving UNICEF general resources would require special attention so that they would not see their progress for children reversed. The same speaker expressed support for efforts to rectify UNICEF maternal mortality statistics, especially in countries with good record-keeping and databases. The Executive Director said that reform was not an end in itself and that the quality of country programming must be paramount. In this context, UNICEF was continuing to work with all its partners on achieving the World Summit goals. UNDAF offered the possibility of getting partner agencies more involved in these efforts.

22. A delegation looked forward to the results of the upcoming first meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health because of the substantial field-level cooperation between the three agencies. A speaker asked about the possibility of receiving regular reports from the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and said that the relationship between UNICEF and UNAIDS needed to be developed.